

REGION 10 - MARINE

SEYMOUR SCHIFF AND ALVIN WOLLIN

The weather for the months of June and July was almost a text book case of adherence to the norm. There was little deviation in either normal temperature or rainfall from daily averages. The high on 12 Jul dipping below 70° was the only exception. August also had normal temperatures, but it was the wettest August on record with 12.36 inches three times normal at New York City. As we have been discovering, weather bureau records for New York City, which continue as the basis of weather statistics for this Region's reports, do not tell the whole story. On Friday 24 Aug, showers dumped 6.8 inches of water on MacArthur Airport between 6 AM and 5 PM. This tapered off to 2.5 inches at Mineola to the west. Most of the rain came in sustained downpours. These August storms provided strong east winds and a lot of water on the ground. The combination brought shorebirds to land and provided convenient habitat for them. Consequently the end of this season was another banner year for this group.

The summer season has usually been a period of quiet and relaxation except for the various mid June breeding bird counts held each year and the summer pelagic trips for the adventurous gamblers. This quiet comes to an end with the movement of land migrants starting in mid August. This year was much like last year in that the land migrants were few, perhaps even fewer.

We received reports of about a half dozen reports of trips to Cox's Ledge on the Okeanos whale boat courtesy of Tom Burke, the voice of the New York Rare Bird Alert. Very low numbers were reported this year with the highest counts from mid to late June and again in late August.

The offsetting birding excitement was the shorebirding on the south shore of Long Island. The rains of August supplied the perfect habitat on the barrier strip at both Jones Beach West End to the west and Cedar Beach to the east. The latter location had 33 species during the period. The entire Jones Beach strip and the Line Islands in the bay behind the barrier beach had 34 species. It wasn't just a case of a lot of shorebirds and a lot of species. In some cases there were unprecedented numbers. Tony Lauro and Andy Baldelli visited the Line Islands throughout the summer. These undisturbed islands supported large summer concentrations of apparently nonbreeding Willet. They saw 475 on July 4 building to 850 on the mud flats on 15 July with 500 still there on 5 Aug.

Their counts for Short-billed Dowitcher were 200 on 4 Jul, 900 on 8 Jul, 1750 on 15 Jul, 1500 on 21 Jul, and **3275** on 8 Aug. White-rumped Sandpipers were also seen in extraordinary numbers as migrants this summer. About a quarter of the peep were this species most of the times. Usually one sees only small numbers in the flocks of Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers. Tony Lauro noted that on the peak of 26 Aug, a minimum of **1000** were counted by various observers on the south shore: 750+ at Cedar Beach, 100+ at the Line Islands, 100+ at Jones Beach West End plus large numbers at Jamaica Bay Wildlife Sanctuary.

Killdeer have always nested in close proximity to man. Successful nests with fledged young have been found in the fields at Zachs Bay for the past several years. This year a pair raised three chicks on the Harlem Meer in Central Park.

The Osprey continues its successful movement westward with an active nest this summer on an island in Jamaica Bay (within the New York City border). Close to the city, there are now at least three active nests on the south shore of Nassau Co plus pairs nesting at Mill Neck on the north shore. This success is all due to the nest platform program of our various municipal Departments of Environmental Conservation.

This is the second year in a row that Little Gull have summered at Cedar Beach. This year's birds were an imm and a first year bird, although only one individual was seen most days. Bonaparte's Gull have also been summering together with them in the same ponds. There were almost no reports of Gull-billed Tern. This has never been a common nester, although there are usually a few pairs in the region. Nevertheless, they have been more visible over the past few years. This summer only single birds were reported, one at Moriches and the other at Breezy Point, both in June. On a more pleasant note, a **Sandwich Tern** visited the latter place from 2-6 July.

With the gypsy moths absent from the news, cuckoos sightings have also diminished. It remains to be seen as to whether this is due to fewer birds or lack of reports to your Regional editors. James Clinton reported that a pair of **Summer Tanager** apparently bred on the grounds of the Brookhaven National Laboratory. Birds were seen carrying food and subsequently a juvenile was observed being fed by the male. This is the first reported nesting of this species in New York State. Two female Boat-tailed Grackle were seen by Tony Lauro feeding young at the Cedar Beach Marina on 15 Jul. This represents an eastward expansion of nesting for this species.

As a special note, Guy Tudor, one of our own, has been awarded a fellowship by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. It is of interest that his prestigious award has been given to an ornithologist, albeit "self trained" as per the New York Times.

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Abbreviations: CB - Cedar Beach; CL - Cox's Ledge; CM - Cow Meadow, Freeport; CRSP - Connetquot River State Park; CSCBC - Central Suffolk CO Breeding Bird Census; CTBC - Captree Breeding Bird Census; FBF - Floyd Bennett Field; HSP - Hecksher State Park; JBWR - Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBch - Jones Beach; JBWE - Jones Beach West End; JFKWS - John F. Kennedy Wildlife Sanctuary (Tobay); LI - Long Island; Mutn - Muttontown Preserve; NYRBA - New York Rare Bird Alert; PBP - Pelham Bay Park; SI - Staten Island.

LOONS-DUCKS: Com. Loon: a pair summered at the JBch Coast Guard Station. Cory's Shearwater: 20 CL 26 Jun, others 23 Jun to 31 Jul, ten 20 miles south of Fire I 11 Aug (PM), 190 on 18 Aug. Greater Shearwater: 25 CL 26 Jun, others to 31 Jul, 20 on 18 Aug. Sooty Shearwater: 20 CL 16 Jun, others 2 Jun to 31 Jul, five 20 miles south of Montauk Pt 12 Jul (PM). Manx Shearwater: one Rockaway Inlet 12 Jun (Louis DeMarco), singles CL 16 Jun, 23 Jun, 31 Jul. Wilson's Storm-Petrel: singles CL 2 Jun, 26 Jun, 7 Jul, ten on 31 Jul, three on 18 Aug, 30 on 19 Aug. **Brown Pelican**: one off JBch 8 Jul (SW), three in bay off Breezy Pt 14 Jul, six Moriches roosting on an island 13 Aug (AB). Double-crested Cormorant: considerable numbers in the bay areas of JBch, seemingly many more this summer. Least Bittern: apparently nested on SI, a young bird was found in a marsh in the vicinity of the Goethal's Bridge by Harry Jenkins on 13 Jul; others at JBWR. Mute Swan: over 400 in w SUFF and at least 80 at JBWR, continues to expand along with the Canada Goose. Snow Goose: single JBWR 25 Aug to end of period. Com. Merganser: four Westhampton 16 Jun, one Quogue-Brookroad Refuge all summer (JC). Red-breasted Merganser: numerous females in the bays all summer.

HAWKS-ALCIDS: Osprey: *intro*. Bald Eagle: imm SI 15 Jul (Harry Jenkins), one PBP 29 Aug. N. Harrier: two nests FBF (JB). Broad-winged Hawk: Mutn throughout period. Red-tailed Hawk: Mutn throughout period. Am. Kestrel: four nests FBF (JB). Peregrine Falcon: widespread reports. Wild Turkey: 27 CRSP. **Black Rail**: one Middle Line I 26 Aug (AL, AB). Com. Moorhen: one Captree I 23 Jun (AL, AB), very unusual on the barrier beach. Lesser Golden-Plover: one CB 22 Jul and afterwards, 51 Riverhead 22 Aug, two CM 30 Aug (PM). Killdeer: *intro*. Am. Oystercatcher: 150 JBWR 25 Aug (JR). **Black-necked Stilt**: one CM 1 Jun (PM). Am. Avocet: one CB 8-12 Aug (mob). Willet: *intro*. Upland Sandpiper: did not nest at FBF or HP (only migrants in the western part of the Region), two St. Charles Cemetery 12 Aug, two CB 13 Aug, 56 Sod Farm at Riverhead 22 Aug, lesser numbers through the end of the period. Whimbrel: various reports in Aug,

max 21 at CB 11 Aug. Hudsonian Godwit: max of 26 Line Ids 19 Aug (AL, TB). Marbled Godwit: one Line Ids 21 Jul-4 Aug, one CB 30 Jul-7 Aug, one JBWE 12 Aug, four JBWR late Aug. W. Sandpiper: many at CB 22 Jul, 250 CB 8 Aug, 120 Line Ids 26 Aug (AL, AB). White-rumped Sandpiper: *intro*. Baird's Sandpiper: two CB 26-31 Aug. Pectoral Sandpiper: 75 CB 26 Aug. **Curlew Sandpiper**: one Line Ids, one JBWR 29 Aug-3 Sep (AL, AB). Stilt Sandpiper: 59 CB 11 Aug (KF). Buff-breasted Sandpiper: various SUFF sites late Aug. Ruff: a black male CB 30 Jun-1 Jul (AL, mob). Short-billed Dowitcher: *intro*. Long-billed Dowitcher: three Line Ids 21 Jul. Wilson's Phalarope: one JBWR 10 Jul through the period, several CB 27 Jul through the period. Red-necked Phalarope: one CB 11-12 Aug (AL, AB, mob). Pomarine Jaeger: three CL 2 Jun, four on 23 Jun, one on 26 Jun. Parasitic Jaeger: one mile off Montauk Pt 3 Aug (BA). Little Gull: one CB 16 Jun to 24 Jul, a second on 1 Jul (AL); *intro*. Bonaparte's Gull: 15 CB 23 Jun, eight 22 Jul, two 5 Aug. Black-legged Kittiwake: one CL 18 Aug. Gull-billed Tern: *intro*. Royal Tern: small numbers along the entire s shore of LI from mid Aug on. **Sandwich Tern**: *intro*. Roseate Tern: three on a swimmer's float with an influx of 80 Common and 3 Least Terns at Prybil Beach, Glen Cove 10 Jul (RC); 90 nests were counted at CB by Marilyn England, about 10% less than last year. Arctic Tern: one reported at Cox's Ledge [Rhode Island? - *The Editor*] on 2 Jun (NYRBA). Forster's Tern: seven JBWR 29 Aug. Black Tern: two Line Ids 14 Jul, one Moriches 4 Aug, one CB 19 Aug, one JBWR 29 Aug.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS: Barn Owl: box with four young FBF (jb), others in boxes on marsh islands Jamaica Bay and NASS. E. Screech-Owl: nesting again on the n shore of NASS and SUFF. Great Horned Owl: nesting again on the n shore of NASS and SUFF.

FLYCATCHERS-STARLING: Acadian Flycatcher: one HSP 16 Jun (AL). Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: two CRSP 9 Jun (CTBC), eight on 16 Jun (CSCBC).

VIREOS-WARBLED: Yellow-throated Vireo: one HSP 9 Jun (AL). Warbling Vireo: one singing Mutn into late June. Blue-winged X Golden-winged Warbler: one "Brewster's" with three Blue-winged Warblers Wading River 29 Jun (JC). Black-throated Green Warbler: two singing males CRSP 9 Jun (Joan Quinlan, Edith Wilson). Prothonotary Warbler: seen at Belmont L SP 11 Jun, becoming more numerous and staying later in the season in recent years. Yellow-breasted Chat: two Mt Lovetts SI 8 Jul.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS: **Summer Tanager**: *intro*. Blue Grosbeak: one PBP Jun to 29 Aug (B. Candido). Savannah Sparrow: two territories at FBF. Grasshopper Sparrow: one territory at FBF, apparently not at HP. E. Meadowlark: a few scattered reports but none of nesting. Boat-tailed Grackle: bred on SI (HF) and Line Ids; *intro*. Orchard Oriole: a female carrying a fecal sac Beaver L 5 Jul (RC).

EXOTICS: Black-hooded Parakeet: six Whitestone 2-27 Aug (Art Scopec).
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